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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 1397th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 23 August 1991, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. ALARCON de QUESADA (Cuba)
(Vice-Chairman)

- 98th Report of the Working Group
- Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international organizations associated with the United Nations (continued)
- Military activities and arrangements by colonial Powers in Territories under their administration which might be impeding the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (continued)

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- Activities of foreign economic and other interests which are impeding the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in Territories under colonial domination and efforts to eliminate colonialism, apartheid and racial discrimination in southern Africa (continued)

- Organization of work

- Closing of the Special Committee meetings in 1991

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Alarcon de Quesada (Cuba), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.45 p.m.

98th REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP (A/AC.109/L.1770)

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I invite members to consider document A/AC.109/L.1770, containing the 98th report of the Working Group. If there are no comments, I shall take it that the Committee is prepared to adopt the report of the Working Group.

It was so decided.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES BY THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE UNITED NATIONS (A/AC.109/L.1771) (continued)

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I wish to draw members' attention to the draft resolution contained in document A/AC.109/L.1771.

I call on the representative of Czechoslovakia for an explanation of vote before the voting.

Mr. SLABY (Czechoslovakia): Everyone in this Committee knows that more than a small number of United Nations Member States have reservations about the Committee's work, or are not very enthusiastic about affixing their signatures to materials the Committee produces. The opinion or, rather, the conviction of my delegation is that the prepared texts of the draft resolutions on activities of foreign economic and other interests, on military activities and arrangements in Territories and on the implementation of the Declaration by the specialized agencies are no better than last year's texts. Of course, some progress has been made, although it is limited, to the extent that, when compared with developments, it is not progress but actually regress.

(Mr. Slaby, Czechoslovakia)

In the light of this situation, we cannot but recall what my delegation stated last April in this forum:

"Where is it stipulated that the Special Committee of 24 has the right to draft all, or almost all, of the General Assembly's decolonization resolutions?" (1378th meeting, p. 12)

Such a practice of the Committee of 24 should be changed. The Committee should adopt its own report, including the Committee's resolutions contained in it; and the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly should consider that report, possibly modify the recommendations of the Committee of 24, and subsequently adopt them, unlike the present stereotyped and untenable practice, in fact, of merely taking note of them.

These texts, which are being submitted to the plenary session as a result of extended consultations, bear out our opinions of last spring. They should not be submitted by the Committee to the General Assembly. They are outdated, obsolete and wordy, and do not reflect developments in the areas concerned and in the world. The draft resolutions are controversial, and include unacceptable name-calling. Many of their provisions have no direct linkage with the items under consideration and deal with the question of apartheid, which is not - if members attentively look through document A/AC.109/L.1755 - on the agenda of the Special Committee. Lastly, these draft resolutions pose a serious obstacle to the possibility of reaching consensus in the General Assembly. Guided by these arguments, my delegation will abstain in the votes on these draft resolutions. Nevertheless, we reserve our right to express our position on some particular paragraphs of all the texts.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): The Committee will now take action on draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1771. Separate votes have been requested on the sixteenth preambular paragraph and on operative paragraph 20.

We shall vote first on the sixteenth preambular paragraph.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

The sixteenth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1771 was retained by 17 votes to 3, with 2 abstentions.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): The Committee will now vote on operative paragraph 20 of draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1771.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

Paragraph 20 of draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1771 was retained by 16 votes to 3, with 2 abstentions.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): The Committee will now take a decision on draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1771, as a whole.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

Draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1771, as a whole, was adopted by 20 votes to none, with 4 abstentions.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I shall now call on those members wishing to speak in explanation of vote after the voting.

Mr. LOHIA (Papua New Guinea): My delegation participated fully in the consultations on the drafting of this draft resolution and on others. Our main difficulty is that we have to remember that when we point a finger at somebody there are four fingers pointing at ourselves, so we are very cautious about name-calling. Sometimes name-calling can be positive, when we praise, but sometimes name-calling involves criticism. In this particular context, if

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

name-calling is to be allowed, then we should at least list all the names - which would be very difficult. I hope that in the future we can move away from this practice.

Secondly, there was some confusion during the voting process. Papua New Guinea had intended to abstain in the votes on the sixteenth preambular paragraph and on operative paragraph 20. We voted in favour of the draft resolution as a whole.

I should also like to put it to the members of the Committee that the Territories concerned, particularly Non-Self-Governing Territory and colonial Territories in the Pacific and the Caribbean, and their needs and aspirations should be fully taken into account if these draft resolutions are to be more realistic with respect to the work of the Committee. I appeal to members to remember this when we come to deal with these issues again in future sessions.

Mr. LEHNE (Norway): I asked to speak in order to comment on the draft resolution just adopted on the implementation of the Declaration by the specialized agencies. Norway abstained in the voting on that draft resolution as a whole and voted against the sixteenth preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 20.

(Mr. Lehne, Norway)

Norway has for many years actively supported the efforts of the specialized agencies to provide assistance, within their particular competence, to those struggling for freedom and self-determination. Correspondingly, Norway has provided increased humanitarian, technical and education assistance to peoples that have not yet exercised their right to self-determination and their right freely to determine their own political future.

In their revised programme of action against apartheid, the Nordic countries have committed themselves to increasing their humanitarian assistance to refugees and liberation movements, as well as to victims and opponents of apartheid, and to the front-line States, both directly and through the specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies. This Nordic programme also establishes that the granting of loans, including participation in international loans, to South Africa should be prohibited or discouraged. As far as loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to South Africa are concerned, such loans should be discouraged with due regard to the articles of agreement of the IMF as long as the apartheid system and its negative effects on the South African economy remain.

Although Norway accordingly supports the main thrust of the draft resolution we have just voted on, we regret that it still contains some elements which cause problems of principle. My delegation deeply regrets that a resolution regarding assistance to peoples that are struggling for self-determination is sabotaged by issues extraneous to the subject-matter. This Committee seems to disregard the positive developments that have taken place in South Africa over the past year and ignores policy declarations of the South African Government with regard to the Treaty on the

(Mr. Lehne, Norway)

Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This fact undermines the credibility of the Committee and, regrettably, the interests of the peoples that are struggling for self-determination. Norway deplores the singling out of individual countries or groups of countries as allegedly being responsible for the policies pursued by the South African Government, and we oppose the inclusion of paragraphs irrelevant to the substance of the matter.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): The Committee has thus concluded consideration of the item.

MILITARY ACTIVITIES AND ARRANGEMENTS BY COLONIAL POWERS IN TERRITORIES UNDER THEIR ADMINISTRATION WHICH MIGHT BE IMPEDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (A/AC.109/L.1772) (continued)

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I wish to draw members' attention to draft decision A/AC.109/L.1772 on this item. First I call on the Acting Secretary of the Committee on a point of clarification.

Mr. DRISS (Acting Secretary of the Committee): There are, unfortunately, errors in the English version only of the draft decision. Owing to time constraints, we had to rush the text through editing. In paragraphs 5 and 8, there are square brackets that should have been removed from the text.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): The Committee will now take action on draft decision A/AC.109/L.1772.

A separate vote has been requested on paragraph 7. Therefore, the Committee will vote first on that paragraph.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

Paragraph 7 was retained by 17 votes to 3, with 3 abstentions.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): The Committee will now vote on the draft decision, as a whole.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

Draft decision A/AC.109/L.1772, as a whole, was adopted by 20 votes to none, with 4 abstentions.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I call on the representative of Norway, in explanation of vote.

Mr. LEHNE (Norway): My delegation abstained in the vote on draft decision A/AC.109/L.1772, as a whole; and voted against its paragraph 7.

My delegation still considers the request for withdrawal of military installations contained in this draft decision to be too categorical. We also deplore the continued practice of selectively singling out individual countries as supporters of the political policies pursued by the South African Government, particularly in view of the changes that have taken place in South Africa and the decision of the Government of South Africa to become party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

For those reasons, Norway was not able to join in the consensus.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): The Committee has thus concluded consideration of the item.

ACTIVITIES OF FOREIGN ECONOMIC AND OTHER INTERESTS WHICH ARE IMPEDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES IN TERRITORIES UNDER COLONIAL DOMINATION AND EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE COLONIALISM, APARTHEID AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (A/AC.109/L.1773) (continued)

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I wish to draw members' attention to draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1773 on this item.

(The Chairman)

Since no delegation wishes to make a statement in explanation of vote before the voting, the Committee will now take action on draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1773.

Separate votes have been requested on the seventh preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 5.

We shall first vote on the seventh preambular paragraph.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

The seventh preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1773 was retained by 19 votes to 3, with 1 abstention.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): The Committee will now vote on paragraph 5.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

Paragraph 5 of draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1773 was retained by 16 votes to 3, with 3 abstentions.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): The Committee will now take a decision on draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1773, as a whole.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

Draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1773, as a whole, was adopted by 20 votes to none, with 4 abstentions.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their vote after the voting.

Mr. LEHNE (Norway): My delegation abstained during the vote on the draft resolution contained in document A/AC.109/L.1773, as a whole. We voted against the seventh preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 5. I would like to reaffirm Norway's longstanding support for any realistic step compatible with the Charter of the United Nations to implement the Declaration

(Mr. Lehne, Norway)

on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in all territories under colonial domination.

Against this background, Norway does not hesitate to condemn the activities of all those foreign economic and other interests which do impede the process of decolonization. However, the draft resolution that was just adopted does not recognize that foreign economic and other activities can indeed be beneficial to the economic and social development of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. This failure to distinguish between various kinds of activity seems to us to detract from the fundamental aims of the draft resolution.

In addition, we have reservations of principle with regard to a number of specific paragraphs in the draft resolution that fail to take into account the Charter provisions concerning the division of competence between the General Assembly and the Security Council. Moreover, we oppose the arbitrary singling out of groups of countries and individual countries as allegedly maintaining extensive links with South Africa in diverse fields.

The world has lately witnessed important improvements in the international political climate. Some of the texts of this Committee do not seem to keep up with these developments and are thus becoming increasingly outdated. I am referring particularly to the positive developments in South Africa, including the declaration of the Government of South Africa of its intention to become a party to the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty.

It is our hope that this trend in the Committee can be changed in order to enhance the credibility of its work.

Mr. BYKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): With respect to our votes today on two draft resolutions and a draft decision, and in the light of the fact that this session of the Special Committee will soon be coming to an end, our delegation would like to refer to the positive events that have taken place in the course of this session, including those related to the streamlining of our work methods.

It is with some sense of satisfaction that we note that, on the basis of a consensus, we had already adopted an omnibus resolution on 10 colonial Territories as well as several other decisions reflecting the Committee's unanimity.

(Mr. Bykov, USSR)

The progress which has thus been achieved is the result of this spirit of cooperation and the constructive and collective efforts of the members of the Committee. Nevertheless, as was clear from today's votes, there are still some points on which the Committee has not yet achieved consensus, which of course can only be regretted. All members of the Committee must make a concerted effort in order to arrive at practical consensus decisions while taking fully into account the real situation. This would contribute to a strengthening of the efficiency of the measures adopted in the interests of the colonial Territories and of the completion of the decolonization process.

The Soviet delegation will in future continue to cooperate actively with all delegations in order to achieve this important aim.

Mr. KOLAROV (Bulgaria): I shall be very brief and refrain from expressing the well-known position of the Republic of Bulgaria on the questions on which we have just taken decisions. Regrettably, the language in some of the paragraphs of the texts - including name-calling - as well as their content, made them unacceptable to my delegation. Hence, it was impossible for my delegation to join in a consensus. We therefore voted against those paragraphs and abstained in the votes on the text as a whole.

Nevertheless, we should like to commend the spirit of cooperation which prevailed in the Committee during its deliberations, including those of the open-ended Working Group, and express the hope that next year the Committee will be in a position to prepare more balanced consensus texts fully reflecting the new realities in the world.

Mr. NKOUNKOU (Congo) (interpretation from French): Our delegation voted in favour of the draft resolutions and draft decision just adopted, thereby illustrating the importance Congo attaches to the right of peoples to exercise their right to self-determination.

However, in view of the complementarity and interdependence of the world economy today, we view the condemnation as a whole of the role of multinational corporations as lacking a sense of realism. It must be emphasized that not all of them are predatory. Also, we regret the singling out of only one State as regards the situation in southern Africa.

Mr. HAGOSS (Ethiopia): We wish to take this opportunity to make a very brief statement, especially in view of the rather positive spirit which has prevailed in the Committee.

We are in agreement with the very well considered view expressed by Ambassador Bykov of the Soviet Union to the extent that this particular session of the Committee has been rewarding. It has been rewarding because we have been able for the first time to adopt an omnibus draft resolution covering a number of Non-Self-Governing Territories. We have also been able to adopt draft resolutions and decisions which succeeded in commanding the support of many, if not all, delegations. We are grateful to you for this, Sir. We very much appreciate the tremendous efforts you have deployed, in spite of your corollary duties in the Security Council. We are also grateful to your colleague from Havana, Ms. Maria Cecilia Bermudez, who guided the Working Group that considered the three most contoversial draft resolutions and decisions.

At the outset of the consultations we had the opportunity to indicate that on the question of apartheid the Committee stands to benefit from the

(Mr. Hagoss, Ethiopia)

considered views of, first and foremost, the people of South Africa, as represented by their legitimate representatives, namely, the liberation movements. We also had occasion to say that the front-line States may also provide us with indications. We were happy to see that in the consultations that were held these legitimate representatives had indeed their own input. Because of their participation, the texts maintained some very important elements which were in the hearts of the people of South Africa; but they were also couched in such a way as to ensure that the draft resolutions and decisions commanded the widest possible support.

This delegation attempted - and will continue to attempt - to make its contributions so that the Committee could be in a position to reflect the realities whatever such realities might be. We would have been very happy, for instance, if the latest developments concerning South Africa - especially its signature of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and other important issues - had found a place in the text in one form or another. As I indicated in the early consultations, had that been the case this delegation would have voted in favour of the text. If we attempted to work for a consensus, it was because we wanted to galvanize as much support as possible for the cause of South Africa. We shall therefore continue to make such efforts, including at the forthcoming session of the Fourth Committee.

On this occasion, we would again like to thank you, Sir, and all those delegations that were involved in the consultations. I will say again that we could have achieved more had there not been occasions on which we lost some opportunities.

(Mr. Hagoss, Ethiopia)

Coming as I do from an agrarian society, I always learn a lesson from a proverb in my country that says:

"Those who overstretch their hands to hold onto an apple on a tree may take the unnecessary chance of losing a jarful of wine from their armpit."

Be that as it may, I think we can congratulate ourselves for having succeeded in adopting draft resolutions and decisions which really commanded quite significant support. As we have seen, the results are very encouraging, and I hope that we shall continue to learn from the constructive dialogue which has prevailed under your chairmanship, Sir, and also under the chairmanship of your very able colleague, Ms. Bermudez. To both of you, and to all delegations, we are grateful, and we intend to learn a few lessons so that the Committee may continue to ensure its relevance, efficacy and efficiency.

Mr. SLABY (Czechoslovakia): My delegation voted against some paragraphs on which a separate vote had been requested, owing to our reservations of principle. Moreover, we are not happy with other provisions as contained, in particular, in the following paragraphs: the thirteenth and seventeenth preambular paragraphs and operative paragraphs 17 and 18 of document A/AC.109/L.1771 on specialized agencies; paragraphs 5, 6 and 8 of document A/AC.109/L.1772, dealing with military activities; and the eighth preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 6, 7 and 9 of document A/AC.109/PV.1773, dealing with economic interests.

My delegation has stated several times that Czechoslovakia stands for full observance of the Declaration on decolonization for completion of the decolonization process. We believe it is important to recall our position precisely in the context of the texts that have just been adopted. Specifically, what my delegation has in mind is that the United Nations should approach the eradication of the remnants of colonialism in a fundamentally new way emanating from the spirit of our times. The adoption of an omnibus draft resolution and the approved merger of the Subcommittees are just two very good steps in that direction.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): The Committee has thus concluded its consideration of the item.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I wish to draw members' attention to aide-mémoire 22/91 on Western Sahara, which was distributed at the outset of this meeting, and which contains a proposal submitted by the Expanded Bureau of the Committee. Does any member wish to comment on this

(The Chairman)

matter? Since that does not appear to be the case, may I take it that the Committee approves the proposal contained therein?

It was so decided.

Mr. HAGOSS (Ethiopia): As I must fax the outcome of this meeting to headquarters, I should appreciate a legal clarification as to whether the proposal contained in the form of an aide-mémoire that the Committee has just approved constitutes a decision, a recommendation or a proposal by the Committee?

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I would describe it as a decision taken by the Committee at its 1397th meeting with regard to the proposal submitted by the Expanded Bureau, and contained in aide-mémoire 22/91.

The Committee has thus concluded consideration of all substantive items on its agenda.

CLOSING OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS IN 1991

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): May I, at the very outset, state how privileged I feel to have presided over the meetings of the Special Committee during a large part of this year.

This past year will indeed be remembered as a watershed in the work of the Special Committee. With Namibia's independence in the thirtieth year of the adoption of the Declaration contained in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), the work of the Committee entered a new phase.

Aware of the unique issues and specific problems affecting the remaining colonial Territories, the Committee has reviewed its method of work in the search for greater efficiency and rationalization, so as to strengthen its efforts on behalf of the peoples of the Territories.

(The Chairman)

All delegations contributed to this endeavour with a spirit of open-mindedness and a determination to listen to different points of view, while keeping in mind the paramount interests of the peoples of the Territories and their representatives. Special emphasis was placed this year on the specific needs of the Non-Self-Governing Territories and on the welfare of their inhabitants.

I should like to state my appreciation to Ambassador Lohia, Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea, for having presided over our Working Group on review of the work of the Committee, which came up with the pertinent recommendations that guided our work this year. In my opinion, the results of this Working Group, which were approved by the Committee, are an important contribution to the fulfilment of the Committee's lofty mission of ensuring the implementation of resolution 1514 (XV).

As a result of this review process, the Subcommittee on Small Territories adopted a consolidated draft resolution on 10 Non-Self-Governing Territories, containing preambular and operative paragraphs dealing with aspects common to those 10 Territories in addition to the 10 separate draft resolutions on specific conditions prevailing in each of the Territories. The Subcommittee also prepared separate draft decisions on Pitcairn and St. Helena, as well as a draft resolution on the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. It therefore submitted for members' approval four reports, instead of the usual 13.

The Committee also adopted six draft resolutions on items allocated directly to the Special Committee, some of them dealing with areas of particular concern, such as the implementation of the Declaration by the specialized agencies and the international organizations associated with the

(The Chairman)

United Nations, the activities of foreign economic interests in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, and military activities and arrangements of colonial Powers in Territories under their administration.

(The Chairman)

Similarly, the Committee adopted the report of the Subcommittee on Petitions, Information and Assistance, also presented in a new and consolidated format, incorporating new ideas in its conclusions and recommendations regarding each item of its mandate.

Another major new development is that the Committee, upon the recommendation of the Working Group, decided to merge its two subcommittees and create the Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance, effective 1 January 1992. That decision will undoubtedly rationalize our work by eliminating duplication while consolidating information and enabling the members of the new Subcommittee to reach conclusions and recommendations on the basis of more comprehensive and up-to-date information regarding the Territories.

Looking ahead, one particular area which bears critical importance for our work - namely the cooperation and participation of the administering Powers in the efforts and work of the Special Committee - will continue to require urgent and serious attention. We continue to attach the utmost importance to the dispatch of United Nations visiting missions to the Territories as a means of securing first-hand information on those Territories. As I pointed out earlier, our recommendations this year reflect the main concern of the Committee, namely the specific conditions and problems confronting the peoples of the Territories. In order to act on that concern, it is imperative that we obtain first-hand information.

Self-determination remains a priority on the world scene, and the United Nations continues to play the leading role in assisting the peoples concerned

(The Chairman)

to achieve that goal. The momentum attained during Namibia's independence process will, I hope, lead to yet another successful outcome in the implementation of the United Nations Plan in Western Sahara.

We have entered the decade which the United Nations is viewing as the timeframe for its ultimate efforts in favour of decolonization. These can be completed only through concrete actions based on proposals reflecting the wishes of the peoples of those Territories and responding to their inalienable rights. The task of our Committee is now more than ever to spearhead the efforts of the Organization to fulfil the goal set out in General Assembly resolution 43/47: to ensure complete decolonization by the year 2000. The Special Committee is braced for the challenges ahead, with a spirit of commitment and flexibility.

As we come to the end of this session I should like to express my sincere appreciation to all members of the Committee. Their cooperation and commitment were particularly valuable - indeed, critical - in securing the innovations and flexibility reflected in the exercise of review and reform the Committee undertook this year. It was indeed an honour and an edifying experience for me to preside over our deliberations.

I am indeed grateful to all members, and in particular to Mr. Sverre J. Bergh Johansen of Norway and Mr. Alexander Slaby of Czechoslovakia, for their contribution to the work of the Committee. In the same vein I should like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Mohammad Najdat Shaheed of the Syrian Arab Republic for a task well done. I also thank Mr. Ghazi Jomaa of Tunisia, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Small Territories, and

(The Chairman)

Mr. José E. Acosta Fragachan of Venezuela, Rapporteur of that Subcommittee, for their invaluable efforts in reviewing the situation in the small Territories.

I am especially grateful to my colleague, Ambassador Lohia of Papua New Guinea, for his invaluable leadership, both as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Petitions, Information and Assistance and as Chairman of the Working Group.

I should like to state the appreciation of the Committee for the cooperation of the administering Powers which have participated in the work of the Committee and in the deliberations of the Working Group. We have taken due note of their concerns and views and intend to continue to give them our serious attention as a part of the continuing process of review we have undertaken, while expressing the hope that their participation in the work of the Committee will increase. We also look forward to favourable consideration of the various recommendations contained in our documents and addressed to the administering Powers, particularly relating to the importance of visiting missions in the exercise of our mandate and their concrete and direct contribution to the Committee's search for the best solution for the future status of each Territory remaining on our agenda.

I should like also to pay a tribute here to the specialized agencies that have provided information to our Committee and whose participation is of great importance to the Committee in the accomplishment of its task.

I express my gratitude also to the large number of petitioners from several Territories who appeared before the Committee and provided us with current information regarding prevailing conditions and their views as to the

(The Chairman)

aspirations of the peoples of those Territories. The Committee sincerely hopes to increase these contacts in the near future.

I take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, for his continued efforts in support of the right of self-determination and independence of the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories. I am grateful also to Mr. James Jonah, Under-Secretary-General of our substantive Department, for all the assistance he and his colleagues in the Secretariat have given the Committee throughout the year.

On behalf of the Committee, I wish also to thank our interpreters, translators, verbatim reporters, press and conference officers and many others for the efficient manner in which they assisted us in our work.

I think we can look forward to the forthcoming session of the General Assembly and the Fourth Committee with optimism. The review process we have conducted last year and this year has resulted in concrete efforts to improve the Special Committee's approach, methods and procedures. I am certain these will increase the Committee's effectiveness and place it in a better position to fulfil its mandate to work for the full implementation of General Assembly 1514 (XV), the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. I thank everyone once again for their cooperation.

I declare the 1991 session of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples concluded.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.